

Safeguards Technical Assistance Memorandum Windows XP End of Life

Introduction

Microsoft has stated that they will end support of the Windows XP operating system on April 8, 2014. Therefore Microsoft will no longer provide security updates or technical support for this operating system. The IRS Office of Safeguards requires that all systems that receive, process, store, and/or transmit FTI must be supported.

Risk

Computers running Windows XP with SP3 or running Office 2003 products will continue to work after support ends, but agencies running Windows XP systems will -

- No longer receive security patches which help protect systems from viruses, spyware, and malware
- No longer receive assisted technical support from Microsoft
- No longer receive software and content updates.

Computer systems that run unsupported operating systems have an elevated risk to vulnerabilities that may be exploited by malware.

Safeguard Review

Agencies are expected to update Windows XP systems that receive, store, process or transmit FTI to a supported operating system. Windows XP systems still used by agencies to receive, store, process or transmit FTI after April 8, 2014 will result in a Critical finding during the Safeguard review.

Agencies that utilize Windows XP systems to receive, store, process or transmit federal tax information (FTI) must mitigate the risk of using FTI on an unsupported operating system platform by either migrating to a currently supported operating system, e.g., Windows 7, Windows 8, or removing all FTI from Windows XP systems and sanitizing the systems per Publication 1075 requirements prior to disposal.

While this memo is directed at systems that receive, store, process or transmit FTI, it is highly recommended that agencies migrate all Windows XP systems in their environment to a supported operating system due to the exposure to increased risk that Windows XP systems will pose after support from Microsoft is ended.

Please direct any questions or comments to the IRS Office of Safeguards at safeguardreports@irs.gov.